

## **INDONESIA CUSTOMS**

### **Greetings:**

Indonesians usually shake hands when they greet.

Muslim men may follow a handshake by touching their right palm to their heart in a show of friendship. Women often brush cheeks.

The most common verbal greeting among Indonesians is *Assalamu alaikum* (Peace be upon you); the reply is *Wa'alaikum salaam* (And peace be upon you).

Some people say *Bagaimana kabarnya?* (How is your news?). The question that nearly always follows is *Dari mana?* (Where are you coming from?).

Older individuals are addressed respectfully as *ibu* (mother) or *bapak* (father) alone or followed by their first name.

### **Gestures:**

Indonesians never touch the head of someone who is older or of higher status.

They do not use the left hand to touch others, point, eat, or give or receive objects.

To point at something, many people use the thumb instead of a finger.

Standing with one's hands in the pockets or on the hips is a sign of defiance or arrogance.

The bottom of one's foot may not point toward another person.

Yawning in public is avoided.

### **Holidays:**

Indonesians celebrate International New Year's Day (1 Jan.), Easter, Ascension, *Lebaran* or *Idul-Fitri* (a feast at the end of *Ramadan*), Independence Day (17 Aug.), *Idul-Adha* (Feast of the Sacrifice, honoring Abraham), and *Maharram* (Muslim New Year).

During *Ramadan*, Muslims do not eat or drink from sunrise to sundown but eat a family meal in the evening and before sunrise.

The nation marks *Waisak* (a Buddhist holiday) and *Nyepi* (Hindu New Year). Christians celebrate Christmas and Easter.